

Craft and Toy Routine

Here is a suggested routine to assist you during the day. Please feel free to personalize these suggestions.

History: The economic survival of most early families depended on thrift and industry. While local dry goods and variety stores offered items for home use, housewives endeavored to save money by making and reusing household items. Women and girls also enhanced clothing and linens with lacework, embroidery and other decorative arts.

Housewives took apart worn clothing and tore it into strips for rags. Some rags they braided into rugs, tied into floor mops, or transformed into rag dolls. Women cut scraps of fabric into shapes, pieced them together and quilted them into coverlets. Small children received toys such as dolls from rags, old socks, wooden clothespins or cornhusks. Young men whittled scraps of wood into play objects for younger siblings.

Arrival of students at crafts

- **Welcome** students and ask them to sit down. Exchange introductions.
- **Explain** that they will be making two projects: a Leavings Doll and a Button Spinner. First you will talk about the projects.
- **Explain** that a farm family could not afford to let anything go to waste. Time and materials were used wisely.
- **Ask** students what leavings means. Definition: *leftovers or scraps*. Scraps of material were used to make crafts such as rag rugs and quilts. Sometimes women would let their children use leavings to make dolls or other toys.
- **Ask** students if they know what it means to mend. Definition: *to repair*. Mending is an important skill. Clothes could be mended and passed on to a younger family member. This is another example of how nothing went to waste.
- **Ask** students if they would go to bed at the same time in the winter and summer. (the goal is to point out that a farm family's life revolved around the seasons, daylight and weather)
- **Ask** students to come up with some time consuming chores that needed to be done in the summer. Example: gardening and harvesting.
- **Ask** students what some of their chores might be before school. Examples: make the bed, empty chamber pots, bring in water, help dress brothers and sisters, let chickens out of the hen house, gather eggs, wash dishes, and pack lunches.
- **Ask** students what some of their chores would be after school. Examples: bring in wood, collect eggs, close the hen house, and supervise brothers and sisters.
- **Ask** students what chores would need to be done in the evening. Example: dishes, read, practice musical instruments, needlework.
- **Explain** that children were a very important part of the farm team and even though they worked hard they did have fun playing too.

Making a Doll

- **Ask** each child to pick a piece of colored material.

- **Give** each child a large pattern and a piece of chalk.
- **Show** students how to lay the pattern on the material so that only one edge needs to be cut.
- **Ask** students to mark and cut.
- **Ask** students to repeat the process with a contrasting colored cloth and a smaller pattern.
- **Show** students how to fold the large piece of material in thirds widthwise so that one edge overlaps the other. Then show them how to fold it in half lengthwise.
- **Show** students how to tie a string around the dolls neck to create a head.
- **Show** students how to roll the small piece of fabric into a tube shape. These are the arms.
- **Show** students how to place the arms below the first piece of string. Tie another piece of string below the arms, making sure the arms stay secure.
- **Ask** each student to write their name on their doll by using the masking tape provided.
- **Ask** students to put the doll in their pocket or marble bag. If this is not possible they may put their doll away in their lunch basket.

Making a button spinner

- **Explain** that children did not have many toys, but one favorite toy was a button spinner. Native Americans used acorns to create a similar toy.
- **Pre-cut the string for the students. Measure the length of the string from your fingers to center of your chest and add a few inches.**
- **Pass out string.**
- **Show** students how to thread the string through one hole and then back through the hole that is **diagonal** from it. Ask students if they know what diagonal means.
- **Tie** both ends of the string together.
- Place thumbs through the string, wind and pull; the button will spin (this may take several tries). **Encourage students to continue using the spinners until the bell rings.**
- When the bell rings, line up your students and walk them to the baking station.
- **Students are not allowed to go to the next station unless an adult walks them over.**

End of the day clean up

- Please put all materials back on the table as they were when you arrived.
- Pick up any bits of string and material that have fallen on the floor and discard. Sweep the area as needed.
- We appreciate your help in keeping our facilities clean!